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further facilitated by the division of the page into two columns. The absence of an editorial section is to be regretted, for in the hands of the able editors this would surely have been most interesting and helpful.

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### GRAVE TYPHUS SITUATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

Some idea of the devastating effect of typhus in central Europe and of the danger which threatens the western countries may be gained from the following translation of an appeal addressed to the international committee of the Red Cross by the president of the Austrian Red Cross on behalf of the chiefs of the sanitary service of the former Austrian monarchy. In transmitting this to the various allied Governments, the vice president of the international committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Ferriere, says:

“\* \* \* We consider that the danger which this circular describes is very real and worthy of special attention on the part of the Governments of Europe.

“We will be grateful to you, consequently, if you would intercede with your Government in order that prompt measures be taken in this respect and that, if possible, an international medical commission may be constituted in conformity with the request of the inclosed report, to organize on the premises the necessary prophylactic measures, as was done in Serbia during the epidemic of 1915.”

VIENNA, *March 7, 1919.*

#### INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS,

*Geneva:*

The danger of an epidemic of spotted typhus is threatening, in an alarming manner, all countries of central Europe that have suffered so intensely through the horrors of the war.

Typhus is raging in all the districts of Poland, in the country of the Jugo-Slavs, especially in Old Serbia. In the western part of this country it has become pandemic. Communities, hospitals, barracks, schools have become veritable centers of infection. The epidemic that is threatening the Central Powers from north, east, and south is rapidly spreading toward the west. Contamination is spread by the repatriated soldiers who are in a bad condition, weakened by hunger and privations, who have neither clothes nor linen and are generally covered with lice, and who, therefore, become the victims of infection. In this way this illness, almost unknown in our country, is brought into central and western Europe, into countries where the population is not partially vaccinated through the recurring appearance of the disease, as is the case in the Near East.

The impending danger has, notwithstanding actual divergencies, reunited the countries of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire in a joint action of defense.

In view of the constant spreading of the plague, the Austrian Red Cross Society has received calls for help from all sides, especially from Poland and Ukraine. In accordance with the Austrian Department of Public Health, this Red Cross assembled the sanitary delegates of Poland, the Ukraine, of Jugo-Slavia, and of German Austria for a conference which took place on February 28 last. The "Conseil International d'Hygiène de Prophylaxie," which had met at Budapest with the same intention of uniting all efforts in view of contending with the typhus, had provided one of these delegates with full authority to act. The war having completely exhausted the former Austro-Hungarian States, and these, lacking all material and financial help, can not hope by their own means to be able to put a stop to the constantly progressing epidemic. Quite aware of these circumstances, the sanitary delegates decided unanimously to appeal *by way of the Austrian Red Cross to the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, in order that the allied States, as well as the neutral powers, under the emblem of the Red Cross should be required to set up immediately an international commission in view of contending with the typhus, and that this commission should be provided with all necessary financial and material aid as well as with medical help, in order to carry out an action of assistance and defense on the required large scale.*

When in 1915 typhus killed thousands of people in Serbia, the powerful intervention of the allied countries succeeded in a comparatively short time, but only with considerable effort, in mastering the dreadful plague. It is necessary that sanitary help should be given in an equally generous and clear-sighted way in Serbia and Poland, but especially in Ukraine. In order to destroy the centers of contagion, modern hospitals and disinfection stations should be erected. Mobile sanitary formations, disinfection units, field laboratories, etc., should set to work to suppress the numberless sources of infection.

At the same time, prophylactic measures ought to be taken at all the points of entrance on the western border. Central depots for the repatriated soldiers should be created and provided with an important stock of linen, clothes, food, medicines, disinfectants, and sanitary articles of every kind.

Already the centers of contagion have progressed far into the heart of the former Austrian countries. The small territory of Moravia annexed by the Tchecho-Slovak State had, according to the official sanitary reports of the Government, 231 cases of typhus between February 2 and 8. Almost daily the concentration depots of the Ukrainians and Poles in Vienna transferred cases of typhus to the hospitals for infectious diseases.

The sanitary delegate of Jugo-Slavia reports an increasing wave of typhus proceeding from Old Serbia.

The conditions in the western part of the Ukraine, in former East Galicia, appear to be disastrous.

A report drafted at Stanislaw on February 21 and signed by the Ukrainian Secretary of the Interior, the Health Board of the War Office, and the health board of the home office, as well as by the delegate of the "Conseil d'Hygiène et de Prophylaxie" at Budapest, states as follows concerning the sanitary conditions of this country:

"All the districts of East Galicia are infected by spotted typhus and smallpox. As there are no sources of help as regards doctors, medicines, and sanitary material in the country, rapid and abundant help from without is wanted. In the former fighting zone the people live in underground excavations. They have no linen, scanty clothing, totally insufficient food, and numberless cases of oedema and scurvy. In the whole country there is the greatest need of the most primitive hygienic commodities—baths, soap, coal, etc. The means of communication are absolutely insufficient, roads almost impassable and railways destroyed, and there is a lack of experienced physicians and nurses, of hospitals for infectious diseases, of sanitary establishments, hospital linen, and disinfection establishments. Conditions seem to be similar in eastern Ukraine, but not quite as bad."

In order to understand completely the great danger of the actual typhus epidemic for the whole of Europe it is necessary to refer to the fact that the disease is extremely infectious. During an epidemic of the illness in East Galicia, the mortality amongst adults was about 10 per cent during the war. The character of the plague has become highly aggravated, probably owing to the diminished powers of resistance of the populations, and mortality has greatly increased.

According to scientific research, *the transmission of the disease is caused by the clothes louse; consequently the disease is easy to catch. The formation of centers of infection in distant localities is constantly possible; therefore no country and no people are safe from contagion.*

The danger for Europe is not alone actual but increasing because, without a uniform method of sanitation on a large scale, of the afore-said territories, the centers of contagion will never be destroyed nor the epidemic exterminated. Europe must not only ward off a constant menacing plague but it also has a mission of civilization to perform. *Contending with typhus is a question of civilization. Almost in the heart of Europe a great part of the inhabitants live in conditions unworthy of humanity, a degree of culture that knows neither soap nor linen.*

The Ukrainian authorities show us a tragic picture of the lodging, alimentation, and clothing of the population of a great part of eastern

Galicia, and these conditions demand an immediate intervention of the European powers, even if they were not a constant source of danger for the whole of Europe. For the time being, the coefficient of diseases is increasing on all sides.

According to scientific research the epidemic increases during March and April, and only attains its culminating point at the end of April and in May; therefore, we must expect a progress of the epidemic and its destructive spreading in countries of central Europe that have heretofore been spared.

We can not foresee when and where the epidemic will stop. It is *a great danger for the western countries, so that not only human solidarity but also the certainty of contagion—the immediate danger for the western countries—implies a common action of assistance of all the European countries.*

The sanitary delegates assembled in Vienna decided unanimously on March 1 to send the following telegram to the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva:

“To-day’s conference of all sanitary delegates of former Austro-Hungarian countries confirms far-spread epidemic of spotted typhus in Ukraine, Poland, Serbia. Central and western Europe threatened. In accordance with decision of conference, Austrian Red Cross begs Red Cross, Geneva, convoke immediate meeting international commission with all necessary authorization and means of help and equal assistance of all European countries as during typhus epidemic in Serbia in 1915. Detailed report will follow.”

The undersigned committee repeats, with reference to the condition of affairs described in the preceding, an urgent appeal to the International Committee and begs that in consideration of the extreme seriousness of the sanitary situation, thorough and rapid aid may be granted.

For the Central Committee:

(Signed)                      TRAUN.

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### **ATTENDANCE AT FREE VENEREAL DISEASE CLINICS OPERATED IN EXTRA-CANTONMENT ZONES.**

The activities of the 239 free venereal disease clinics operated by, or in cooperation with, the United States Public Health Service can best be understood by a consideration of the report on the operation of the 25 clinics situated in the extra-cantonment zone areas. These 25 clinics, although they are in communities where the laws regarding the suppression of vice are rigidly enforced, and where the control of communicable diseases is well in hand, are typical of the average clinic operated under the joint supervision of the State boards of health and the United States Public Health Service.